856 864 During a girl's early childhood beginning when she is still nursing, a mother with foresight will work to make her organs as perfect as possible. By applying pressure repeatedly and for long periods, she molds, so to speak, the outside in order to make it narrow, as this quality is greatly valued by our people.

It is the mother, too, who trains the girl in her preparations for married life. She teaches her how to behave toward her future husband, and at the same time instructs her in the duties of a good housewife (see Chapter X, Article VIII).

836 864 Certain forms of behavior, although their relationship to our subject is only superficial and external, must nevertheless be mentioned. An adult man will often take in his arms a little girl who has not yet been weaned, or perhaps only slightly more developed. He considers this child to be his wife. He has paid no bride price for her. But since she is a sister, cousin, or other relative of one of his wives, she is a "wife" from his point of view; that is, not only will it be possible for him to marry her later on, but even without becoming her husband he will enjoy a certain liberty in relation to her. (1) Thus, when such a man takes his young "wife" in his arms,

1. See Chapter VI, Article V, 2.

he is enjoying an anticipation of the future and speaks to her [66] in that sense, often accompanying his words with intimate caresses.

The same practice, mutatis mutandis, may be observed on the part of a woman toward a small boy whom she can consider as her "husband."

304 582 2. Circumcision

Circumcision is generally practiced. It is usually performed at an early age. Without going into the details at this point (1) or

1. They will be found in Chapter X, Article VII.

862 does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [824] with the sap of the liféte fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbénga). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[853] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [823] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Botswa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [235] goat's milk is unknown.

854 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness 751 is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called [853] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bolóf) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the litóyansombo bush and extract of mbólé (fruit of the bosoombó). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: tí tí tí.

856 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingondo) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpao), lest the latter lose their productivity.